

GROWING IN GOD PODCAST



GIG270 – Atonement Our Purification

Hi, and welcome once again to our podcast, *Growing In God*. I am glad you are with us today. I am going to be focusing on the Day of Atonement, as we are quickly coming to the time of that celebration in the current calendar. I want to begin in Leviticus the sixteenth chapter and talk a little bit about the Day of Atonement itself. But I also want to remind everyone that there are several messages in the [podcast archives](#) about the Day of Atonement, where I have been maybe more detailed in the nuances of, and the teaching about, the Day of Atonement itself. So if I seem to be skipping over some of the relevant ideas or concepts about the Day of Atonement, what you could do is go back and study some of the other messages that have come through the podcast, and see if that would help fill in some gaps for you. Also, in the podcast there have been several teachings about salvation, the cross, and those would be good to reach into and review also.

To begin, we see that the Day of Atonement is covered in Leviticus the sixteenth chapter. I am going to jump down to the end of the chapter, to verses 29-31, and read about this celebration.

“This shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It is to be a Sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute.”

I know this is kind of at the end of the chapter, but it is really giving you God’s instructions about why we are to engage with the Day of Atonement, and what it is that we should expect to receive out of this time. It is a permanent statute, and it is looking to bring about for us the cleansing that we are to receive: “You will be clean from all of your sins before the Lord.” It is to be a Sabbath, and we are to celebrate it as a Sabbath. I want to point out that when you read through the details of the sacrifices done during the Day of Atonement, you realize that there really are two things happening here; and that is what I want to focus on with this podcast. Number one is the recognition that we have of the forgiveness of sin – there are sacrifices for sin to forgive the sins of the people. Then number two, we see this terminology that you are to be made clean – you are to be cleansed from all of your sin.

Now these are two very different things, and they must be related to by us as believers as very different. When we look at the first verses in this chapter – and I do encourage you to go through and read the entire chapter of Leviticus 16, because, as I said, I am going to be moving around through it and not trying to cover each detail. But in the details of it, we see that the first thing the high priest would do is make sacrifices, or sin offerings, which were to be for himself, for his family, for the tent of the Tabernacle and all of the implements that were used in the sacrificial procedures of the Old Testament sacrifice. Everything was to come and bring the sacrifice which brings forgiveness. So when we look at this Day of Atonement, we know that God is determined to forgive us of our sin. But we also recognize, as we go through, that He is looking to do something more than that, which is to cleanse us of our sin. So I want to go back above to verses 18-20 and begin reading there.

“Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it [in other words, for the altar], and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides. With his finger he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times and cleanse it, and from the impurities of the sons of Israel consecrate it. When he finishes atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat.”

So now what we are seeing here between verse 19 and verse 20 is the ending of the offerings for the forgiveness of sin, and then going on to this next phase, which is the offering of the other live goat, which is the Azazel goat; and we will see what is proceeding here. Verses 21-22,

“Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.”

Then Aaron comes into the Tent of Meetings, takes off the linen, and so forth; you can continue reading on down to see what the procedure is. But we recognize then that there are two very distinct procedures happening on this Day of Atonement. All of these do relate to our own repentance, because, as he said, this was to be a solemn assembly, a Sabbath rest, that we may humble our souls before the Lord. So do not forget that all of this is done with our own deep cry before the Lord of repentance, of looking to be forgiven of our sin that we have committed; but going further than that, looking to see this procedure, which is represented by the live goat, that is for the cleansing that we are to receive.

When you look at this word in the Hebrew for cleanse here in verse 30, you recognize that it is translated better in English as *cleansing* or *purification*. When we talk about cleansing, I think sometimes we miss the significance, because to cleanse ourselves we sort of are “washing the outside of the cup,” so to speak – we bathe, we wash ourselves. But this is representing something much deeper in the language. It is not just a cleansing as we relate to cleansing ourselves by taking a bath, or cleaning something by wiping the surface of it; it is talking about purification. Either word, whether you translate it *to clean* or *to purify*, would be a correct translation; but it is extremely important in our minds that we relate to what the Lord is doing for us in that.

Number one, we have the sacrifice for our sin that brings forgiveness of our sins that we have committed, our iniquities that we have committed. Then we have this second phase of the atonement represented by the live goat, where the high priest lays his hands upon that goat and places upon it all of the sins of the people and removes it from the camp; so the sin is taken away, it is taken out, it is removed, pulled away from. And you can say this was Christ, who took our sins outside the camp. There are many ways you could relate to the sin; but all of this is taken and it is “taken out of,” and that is what I think the difference is. When we are forgiven, the Lord looks upon our heart as we humble ourselves in repentance, and He is willing to forgive us. That is the sin offerings that are made in the Old Testament; it is our cry of repentance in the New Testament times, where we express the brokenness and sorrow for our sin, and the Lord through the blood of Christ forgives us. But again, there is something more that the Day of Atonement is pointing to that we want to receive; and that is this removing **out of us** the iniquity and the sin, so that we do not continue going through the same process of sinning over and over and over again. That is why the Day of Atonement had to be done annually, because the people would leave the atonement process and enter back into sin. That is not what God is looking for us to have.

To illustrate this through the language, I want to go to Malachi the third chapter and begin reading at verses 1-3. It says,

“Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple [obviously, this is speaking about Mashiach, the Messiah, coming to the Temple]; ...the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the Lord of hosts. “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness.”

Here in verse 3 we have the use of this word *purify*; to be refined, purity. This is the same Hebrew word that we see in Leviticus about cleansing us. It gives the impetus more clearly, I think, of what this word is pointing to as the experience we are to receive when we think about the Day of Atonement. When the Lord comes, when Messiah comes, He does come to forgive us our sin. He goes to the cross and dies for our sin. He spills His blood for our sin and for our forgiveness. But He does something further. And again, if we look at Malachi 3 starting at verse 1, this whole story here, these verses here, are talking about the Messiah and what happens when the Messiah comes. How does He come? What does He do when He comes? It says that He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap, and He will sit as a smelter – so now we begin to see very clearly this difference. When you are talking about smelting and purifying silver, or purifying gold, refining it, you do not leave the impurity inside of it. You are not just forgiving the silver for the pollution that is in it. We know that when you mine silver, or you mine gold, it is mixed with other minerals and other elements; and so, what you do is put the fire to it. You melt it down. And once you melt it down, those impurities float to the top and the smelter scoops off those impurities with a ladle and removes the impurity from the silver, removes the impurity from the gold.

That is what we see represented in the Azazel goat, that the impurity was removed out of the camp, away from the people. So this concept of smelting is far more picturesque for us to be able to grasp the understanding of this Day of Atonement and its true fulfillment. The Messiah comes not just to forgive us through His sacrifice and blood, He comes and sits as a smelter to purify; in other words, to put fire to our lives and to boil us down to the place where as He is dealing with us, as He is trying us and testing us, then the impurities in our life float to the top and He removes those out of us and from us. So when He is done, what are you left with? only the purified silver, only the purified gold. And we as believers are not just to live lives having been forgiven of our sin; we are to live lives that are more represented by this event in the Day of Atonement, that we are forgiven but also cleansed and purified from that within us which allows the sin to remain in our lives.

I want to read verse 3 again: “He will sit,” talking about Messiah, “He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness.” We do see this represented in the New Testament Scriptures, that the testing of our faith is like pure gold tried in the fire (1 Peter 1:7). So God is coming on this Day of Atonement. Why are we celebrating this Hebrew event out of the Old Testament? Many would ask that question. Well, remember the Old Testament is not old, it is the Word of God; and these are things, as it said in Leviticus, that will be celebrated continually, perpetually. They are a permanent statute that is being referred to in the verses of Leviticus the sixteenth chapter. So God is coming in this time, and we should be reaching for it during these days of Atonement, that we find ourselves being purified and refined like silver is purified and refined.

I want to go to Hebrews the tenth chapter now, and I will start at verses 1-2.

For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect [in other words, purify] those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed [or purified], would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

Again, if you look at this word *cleansed* here in verse 2 in the Greek, it has the same meaning – to be *cleansed* or *purified*. So the meaning is going very much across from the Old Testament; and this is what Paul is referring to when he is talking about Christ in Hebrews chapter 10. He is saying that if there was this experience in people where the sin was not just forgiven, but removed, then you actually would have stopped the offerings, because you would have no consciousness of sins – it was so removed that you would not even remember it. Remember, God says He will remove our sin from us as far as the east is from the west. See, that is a removal, that is not a forgiveness; and this is what Hebrews is talking about, this is what Paul is trying to get across to us. He is pointing to Christ as the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement. It is a fulfillment not only of the forgiveness of our sin, but He comes also as the One who removes that sin from us as believers.

I am going to verse 14: “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” See, in Christ we are not merely forgiven, we are sanctified; and this is important, because most of what is talked about in church is our forgiveness. Most people who are believers relate to Christ in a context of forgiveness of sin; and I think it is very necessary for us to go back and recognize that there is a whole aspect to salvation that is yet to be experienced and to be appropriated, if all we are looking at is forgiveness. Verses 14-23,

For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, and on their mind I will write them,” He then says, “and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

God is faithful, and what He has promised is not merely the forgiveness so that the sin is not remembered – which is very true. The sin is forgiven. When God forgives, He does forget. He remembers our sin no more. But He goes beyond that, because in the purification He is then able to put His Law upon our heart, and upon our mind He writes them. So, He is able to see us purified, refined, and perfected in His Presence; and because of that purification, He then goes on to say, in verse 22, that we “draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.” We are able to enter into His Presence because of this state of purity that we have come into.

I want to end by saying very clearly that we should be celebrating this Day of Atonement as it comes this year. And as we celebrate it, we should remember that the Day of Atonement is not only to provide forgiveness of sin; it also provides purification of the believer, enabling us to truly enter the Presence of

the Father. We are thankful for that, and we reach in during these days to humble ourselves before Him and appropriate all that He has provided for us in this Day of Atonement.

Amen.